

## SEATTLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

# Information Bulletin #984



## Emergency Procedures for Multi-Residential Buildings

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This bulletin describes requirements for emergency procedures in apartments, condominiums and other residential buildings in Seattle, in accordance with Article 13 of the Seattle Fire Code.

### Apartment Buildings

Owners or property managers of apartment buildings and condominiums are required to develop and provide to tenants a building specific **FIRE EMERGENCY GUIDE** (SFC SEC. 1303.3.1). The guide will provide tenants with a suggested evacuation plan and information about accessible fire protection equipment in the building.

#### Exemptions:

The following types of buildings are exempt from fulfilling the requirements of Article 13:

- Buildings with direct exiting from each unit with one-hour separation and no common hallway.
- One-story buildings with an interior hallway that serves no more than four units.
- Two-story buildings with open balconies and open stairways.
- Two-story buildings with interior stairways that serve no more than two units at the top of the stairway and two at the bottom.
- Buildings three stories or less in height with open balconies and enclosed stairways.

A sample **FIRE EMERGENCY GUIDE** that meets the minimum requirements for Article 13 is attached to this bulletin. Building owners and managers may add or adapt their fire emergency guide to contain written procedures and information as well. As a minimum, the guide should contain the following:

- location of manual pull fire alarms (if present).
- location of portable fire extinguishers.

- location of single station smoke detectors.
- exit routes from each apartment using the stairs, not elevators.
- instructions for those tenants unable to leave their units using stairwells.
- location of outside assembly area for building occupants.

The **FIRE EMERGENCY GUIDE** should be reviewed by the building owner or manager at least once a year. A copy of the guide should be given to each tenant when they move in, or when changes are made.

### Creating a Floor Plan

Prepare a basic floor plan diagram for each floor of the building. Designate fire exit routes, as well as the location of all fire extinguishers and any manual pull alarm stations. Also note that elevators must not be used as a fire exit. Designate an outside assembly area for all building occupants away from the building and out of harms way.

Floor plan diagrams are required to be posted in the sleeping rooms of hotels, residential treatment facilities, boarding houses, and congregate residences of more than 10 people. Apartment buildings are not *required* to post the plan, but it is *recommended* one floor plan diagram be posted in a central location on each floor.

### Fire Drills

Quarterly fire drills (4 times a year) are required for hotels, apartment houses with full-time staff, congregate residences, residential

treatment facilities, boarding houses, and maternity homes. Drills need only involve staff members, not residents. Apartment buildings without full-time staff are not required to hold drills. After the drill, review your emergency plan as well as the duties of staff members and make any necessary updates or changes.

Keep a record of your building's drills. This should include the date and time of each drill, as well as the name of the person conducting the drill.

## **Additional Resources**

The Seattle Fire Department Public Education Office provides the following free assistance:

- Courtesy review of fire emergency guides.
  - *Apartment Manager's Handbook* is a publication available for download from the Department's web site.
  - Information bulletin's, fire fact sheets and staff training materials are available by calling the Public Education Office at 206-386-1337 or visiting on-line at [www.cityofseattle.net/fire](http://www.cityofseattle.net/fire).
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# SAMPLE FIRE EMERGENCY GUIDE

Every alarm must be treated as a fire emergency. If you hear the fire alarm take these steps to ensure a safe evacuation of the building.

- (1) Leave your unit as quickly as possible, closing the doors as you go.
- (2) Use the stairs, not the elevators, to evacuate the building.
- (3) If you are unable to exit using the stairs, stay in your unit.
- (4) Once outside, move away from the building to the designated meeting place.
- (5) Do not go back into the building for any reason until the Fire Department has given permission to reenter.

## Sample Floor Plan

Fire Alarm ■

Fire Extinguisher 

Smoke Detector ○

Meeting Place:  
NE corner of parking lot

